

Strategies for Preventing Teen Pregnancy in Montana

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has included prevention of teen pregnancies among the high priority public health objectives designated as “winnable battles.” Some strategies have been recommended to prevent teen pregnancy. The value of a strategy depends upon its implementation, its potential effectiveness, and how well it is matched to target populations. Consider implementing the following strategies in your community:

#1

Understand teen pregnancy in your community.

Questions to Consider:

- *What is the teen pregnancy rate and teen birth rate in our county?*
- *Which teenagers are getting pregnant?*
- *What puts teenagers at risk?*
- *What preventive health education is available for teens?*
- *What reproductive health services are available to at-risk youth? Are services appropriate?*
- *Do teens know about these services, and if so, do they use them?*
- *What do the adults (parents and others) in communities where these teens live think about the problem of teen pregnancy and its prevention?*

#2

Build Community Partnerships.

- Identify groups working on issues related to teen pregnancy.
- Help to organize and sustain a community coalition to address teen pregnancy.
- Support youth development programs and other groups that offer teens positive activities. Youth who feel connected to their community are less likely to engage in negative behavior. Recreation, service, and work opportunities can build these connections.

Possible Partnerships include:

- Youth
- Family Planning Clinics
- Teen Clinics
- Community Health Centers
- Youth-Serving Organizations
- Healthcare Professionals
- Schools
- Faith and Spiritual Communities
- Other Healthcare Organizations
- Local Businesses
- Parents/Families
- Policymakers
- Social Services Providers
- Media
- Civic Organizations
- Tribal Councils
- Cultural-Interest Groups
- Community Leaders
- Foundations
- Non-profit Organizations

#3

Create a plan that fits your community! Select from the following recommended interventions.

(1) Partner with parents

- Promote and enhance positive parental involvement in their children's lives from early on.
- Encourage parents to listen, respect, monitor and guide their teens.
- Encourage parents to talk to their children about sex, love, marriage, parenthood and values.
- Provide resources and educational opportunities tailored for parents. Reach parents where they are – at work and in their neighborhoods.

(2) Educate young people and community members about prevention

- Assess education opportunities and barriers in schools, health facilities, community centers, places of worship, and other gathering places.
- Implement science-based teen pregnancy prevention programs that have been evaluated and shown to be effective.
- Educate young people about the legal, financial, and emotional roles and responsibilities of parenthood.
- Provide training for key professionals – such as school staff, health care providers, and clergy – on teen pregnancy prevention.

(3) Increase access to reproductive health care

- Evaluate the accessibility of youth services and any barriers in your community. Are services timely, convenient, confidential, youth-friendly and well-regarded by teens? Are teens aware of the services that are available?
- Encourage all health care providers who provide care to youth to include comprehensive, age-appropriate information on sexual health issues, including prevention of unintended pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections.
- Identify groups that are not utilizing services and conduct outreach to these groups.

Need help putting a plan together? Contact the Women's and Men's Health Section at 406-444-3628

Additional resources are available on the Women's and Men's Health website at

www.dphhs.mt.gov/PHSD/Women-Health/teenpreg-index.shtml

Want to receive updates on state and federal programs and opportunities? Subscribe to the Wednesday Weekly Newsletter on Family Planning and Reproductive Health at

www.dphhs.mt.gov/PHSD/Women-Health/WednesdayWeekly_000.shtml

National Resources

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Teen Pregnancy Prevention

www.cdc.gov/TeenPregnancy/PreventTeenPreg.htm

The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unintended Pregnancy, Resources for States and Communities

www.thenationalcampaign.org/sla/resources.aspx

The Annie E. Casey Foundation, Plain Talk Starter Kit: A Practical Guide to Community-based Programming to Reduce Teen Pregnancy, STDs, and HIV/AIDS

www.aecf.org/KnowledgeCenter/Health/AdolescentReproductiveHealth.aspx